The Alphistian Manifesto

A Personal Paragraph

My political instincts are idealistic, but my talents for politicking are nil. My gifts, such as they are, are in the realm of the imagination, and since an early age, I've imagined a country called Alphistia. This "manifesto" describes a movement to create a real Alphistia, but that would be the result of others' actions, not my own. My role is simply to imagine. (Anton Sakasa)

Introduction

Alphistia is a country in search of both land and people.

All the territory in the world is today claimed by nation states, although new countries have been formed or proclaimed in recent years, peacefully or not. Existing nations are jealous of their territory, no matter how small, but Alphistia would only come into existence by peaceful means. The challenges are great for a new-country project such as Alphistia, and this fact is acknowledged and accepted. Through persuasion and negotiation however, it is hoped that Alphistia can acquire its own small territory. The creation of new land from the sea will also be explored as a solution.

A country must also have people to live in it. In the case of Alphistia, this would happen through people from all around the world choosing to come to live there. Alphistia would not be imposed on people already in a particular place. It would be a new land with a new society and culture, which in the Alphistian language is called the “Lesenum” (a word that means “homeland” or “land of our own”).

Alphistia would be modeled on the best ideals of the Western Englightenment: a secular society with a respect for human rights and the dignity of the individual. Politically, Alphistia would be a constitutional republic, with a democratically elected government, using a form of proportional representation. Economically, it would encourage small businesses and profit-making cooperatives. The economic system would be a sustainable, humane, and regulated capitalism.

It would develop niche markets internationally, but participate globally on its own terms. Alphistia would be a very green country. It would use only electric cars and trains, have an organic agriculture, and would build livable small-scale cities and towns. Socially, it would be tolerant and progressive, with a cradle to the grave social security system. Culturally, Alphistia would have a language of its own and would develop a rich native literature, music, and art.
Project Alphistia is the organization created to organize and guide the development of the Lesenum. The Project would provide information about Alphistia, help people learn the Alphistian language, and negotiate the acquisition of territory for the Lesenum When such land is found, the Project would build the national infrastructure and co-ordinate immigration. In the interim, there would be a community for some members of Project Alphistia to live together.
The coming years will involve much work and many difficulties, but the result would be well worth the effort: Alphistia would be a country with both land and people.

Who is an Alphistian?

The answer to this is very simple. If a person feels they are Alphistian, then they are.
This feeling comes from knowing and accepting the basic aspects of Project Alphistia: the desire to live in a society which was just described in the Introduction, and to be open to learning and using the Alphistian language.
For millions of immigrants, America has been a country with goals based on ideals of the Western Englightenment. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have also had immigrant traditions, and were less ideological than the American example. Alphistia would have its own distinct ideology, and its immigrants would choose to come to live there because they believe in it.
That of course, would mean that Alphistia would not be the ideal homeland for everybody. It would be a place for those who believe in a democratic, green, socially secure progressive state, with its own language and way of life.
Alphistia would welcome people of every racial and ethnic background, and from any country in the world. Alphistia would be multicultural, but with a unitary culture. Those immigrating to Alphistia would be aware of this and would be committed to building a new society. Key to this process would be learning and using the Alphistian language.
Alphistians would in large part, leave behind the aspects of their backgrounds that would not be useful for the creation of a new society. All Alphistians would honor their heritage, but Alphistia would have one official language: Alphistian, and its own national identity.
Although Alphistia could serve as a model for other countries, this is not seen as a goal of the Project. Alphistia's ideology would not be considered the ideal for humanity. Other groups and other nations should be free to organize according to their traditions and beliefs. Alphistia would promote universal values of freedom and democracy, and of respect for human rights for all people in the world. It would not however, crusade to impose its own beliefs and system on others.

A New Language and Culture

For a country like Alphistia, it would be fundamentally necessary to build a new cultural identity. The key to this would be the adoption of Alphistian as the official and everyday language.

It is not a simple task to invent, or to learn, a new language. The invention of Alphistian has been a 40 year plus project, and is still adding vocabulary to the simple grammar of the language. Alphistian is based on an Indo-European model, with influences particularly from the Scandinavian and Germanic languages. It has few exceptions grammatically, an easy pronunciation and consistent spelling rules, and a vocabulary based on compounding root words.

Esperanto has been the most successful new language project. Although it has never achieved its goal as the universal auxiliary language, it has proven that it is possible for hundreds of thousands of people to learn another language for communication and cultural purposes.

The most successful example however, has been the modern revival of Hebrew for use in Israel. One hundred years ago, Hebrew was a language used for religious purposes only, and knowledge of it was extremely limited. With the introduction of the Zionist project led by Theodore Herzl, the creation of a modern Hebrew began. This was largely due to the work of Ben Yehuda. Within a mere few decades, modern Hebrew was being learned and used by Jewish pioneers in Palestine. Since the creation of Israel in 1948, it has been the official language of the new state, and has been learned by millions of immigrants.

There are also other successful language revival projects, such as Irish Gaelic in Ireland, and the creation of Bahasa Indonesia, a modern language that could be used throughout Indonesia, based on Malay. Creoles and pidgins in the Caribbean have also become new languages in recent decades, especially when they are given written forms, such as Papimiento in the Dutch territories and Haitian Kreol.

It is not impossible then for Alphistian to follow these examples. Especially since the process for finding land for the Lesenum could be expected to take some time, this would provide opportunities for further developing the language and teaching it to those involved in the Project. All immigrants would be expected to have already completed a basic course in Alphistian before their arrival, and for those not already sufficiently fluent, the first months would be spent enrolled in intensive language courses. These would be modelled on the successful “ulpan” programs for learning Hebrew in Israel.

For such a small society such as Alphistia, a language of its own would be imperative for cultural survival. The pressures of americanization are too strong in the modern world if the common language of a country is English. English speaking Canada is an example of this. Using Alphistian would allow for a rich development of a unique Alphistian identity. Songs could be written and performed in the language, as well as novels and stories published. Plays and screenplays could be performed and produced, and Alphistian print and broadcasting media would undoubtedly quickly develop. Just like the example of Israel, it would be possible for an Alphistian culture to be created within a relatively short period of time.

English would serve as the second language of Alphistia, permitting easy communication with the educated population of the rest of the world. It would have no official status inside Alphistia however, and would be used less and less for everyday use as a new generation of Alphistians would be schooled with Alphistian as their native language.

Some Words about America

America is known as a nation of immigrants. It still accepts many legal immigrants each year,

and even more come to the country illegally. America is a democracy, an enormously wealthy country, and the most powerful country in the world. It is loved probably by as many who revile it, for as many reasons as there are people.

The US considers itself a universal nation, and a model for the world. For this reason alone, it creates animosity amongst some. Others accept this as part of the country's vast power, although not without reserving the right to criticize American excesses.

For Project Alphistia, America is not the indispensable country as it's sometimes calls itself, but the unavoidable one. As proponents of a different interpretation of the ideals of the Western Englightenment, Alphistia wants respectfully to develop in its own way. It rejects the materialism and superficiality of modern American life, and seeks for its citizens to live more in harmony with nature. Alphistia promotes a more egalitarian social ethic, and a more inclusive political system, and a more humane outlook. The US is primarily dominated politically by its right wing. In Alphistia, there would be less dominance from these political and economic influences, largely because Alphistia's ideology is consciously progressive and more aligned with the mainstream political thought of Europe. The right in Alphistia would be nationalistic, but without the racism, supportive of the proper role of the state in economic affairs, while representing the interests of small business, oriented toward the family, while including same-sex couples as worthy of respect. And the Alphistian right would hardly seek to impose its religious worldview on society at large, as is common with the American Christian Right. Alphistia would be a homeland for secularists and believers who are tolerant.

America is unarguably an imperial power, exercising this mostly through it's pop culture, which is so seductive and so often harmful. When the US is imperially aggressive, it does what it wants regardless of consequences, although the alienation that results in the wake of such action, is largely the reason so many in the world hate Americans. Alphistia wants to opt out of the American political and cultural empire. It would do so at its own risk, as it well knows. The US punishes those countries that are uncooperative. The example of Cuba for the last 45 years shows how the US can hurt a country that opposes it.

Fortunately, the US cannot control its allies, much less all its enemies. Cuba has survived 90 miles off America's shores, and the countries of Western Europe have gone their own way while tacitly accepting American dominance. Alphistia would naturally align itself with European economic and political power.

A small country like Iceland is a good example of an ant trying to avoid being squashed by an elephant. Iceland has only 300,000 people, and American television, movies, and music are as common there as in any other country. Icelanders have adopted a suburban lifestyle that would not be ideal according to an Alphistian perspective, but which is far more environmentally conscious than in the US. The most interesting aspect of modern Iceland is its success in preserving its own traditions and culture. This is primarily accomplished through the careful protection and advancement of the Icelandic language. Although Icelanders are generally fluent in English (as most Alphistians would likely be as well), they use their own language everyday to advance their own culture. Almost all pop music by Icelanders is in Icelandic. They make more films than many other European countries do with ten times the population, and these films are in Icelandic. There is a huge number of books published in Icelandic every year, and the local press is large and much read by all ages of the population.

The model for Alphistia then is a country like Iceland. Other small non-English speaking countries like Estonia, Slovenia or the Faroe Islands also come to mind. None of these countries are opposed to the US, but they develop in their own way. Some are more like the Alphistian ideal than others, but none of them are American.

America is techologically progressive, but not socially or politically. Every new gadget is adopted without much thought as to usefulness or impact, and Americans are hopelessly addicted to automobiles. Politically, America is still tied to a two hundred year old two-party system that is as much outdated as unrepresentative. There is a mean streak socially in American society. Unpopular minorities such as homosexuals are routinely singled out for discriminatory legislation in referenda. Cruel and unusual punishment, although forbidden in the US Constitution is routine, with chaingangs in Southern States, and the death penalty applied unfairly and unjustly, and “barbecues” outside execution scenes permitted by authorities when a prisoner is put to death. Social welfare programs are designed to remind recipients constantly that they are receiving handouts, and benefits are miserly and shortlived. A vast propaganda system designed and controlled by neo-conservative and rightwing hacks permeates radio and television. The country’s largest newspaper (The Wall Street Journal) has an editorial policy to the right of Pinochet, and untruths go unchallenged daily on the Murdoch-owned Fox News Channel. The education system unfortunately produces millions of uneducated citizens, unenlightened and wilfully ignorant, eager consumers of scapegoating, conspiracy theories, and hatemongering. Many of these uninformed masses are further controlled by the indocrination of religious fundamentalism, varying only in degree from similar Islamic fundamentalists such as the Taliban, Wahabbists of Saudi Arabia, or Iran’s ayatollahs. American life is so dominated by the unending propaganda of advertising and consumerism, that all problems are seen as solvable simply by creating a new ad campaign or a new public relations team.

Obviously, there are worse countries in the world than the USA. The human rights violations of China and Saudi Arabia immediately come to mind. The poverty and corruption of so much of Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The violence of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the former USSR, and elsewhere. The insanity of a country like North Korea. Compared to these places, the US is a model of democracy and progress. However, it is not the model for Alphistia.

There are certain aspects of American society that any country could copy and be better for it. These include the historical importance of the development of public education. The US was the first country in the world to promote universal education. Although the state of public schools in America today leave much to be desired, the idea and ideals are laudable. This is also true of the development of public libraries, which arguably are even today the best in the world.

Another great success is the role of public universities in upward mobility. The US has not been as class ridden as many countries (although that is changing unfortunately). Public colleges provided millions of poor Americans entry into the middle class. This was particularly successful after World War II with the GI Bill and through the 1960s and 70s with the expansion of access to higher education.

There are other positives about American society that often balance its many negatives, such as the concept of separation of church and state, the national park system, the ethnic diversity of the country, and the mass immigration. For many, the positives still far outweigh the faults, but

Project Alphistia proposes another model. Alphistia should have its chance to develop for those who want to live in such a society.

The Alpha Village

In the years before the creation of the Lesenum, it would be useful if members of Project Alphistia could live together in an intentional community.

This would have several advantages. First, it would be relatively easy to acquire land, without having the large problems of sovereignty. The community would be a part of country in which it would be located. The Amish communities around the United States are an example of a separate culture and world outlook inside a larger political entity.

Project Alphistia's community would be called the Alpha Village. It could be located anywhere in the US, or perhaps another country. Conceivably, there could be more than one Alpha Village.

The Alpha Village would be an interim community, set up to unite members of the Project in one place. Their focus would still be on the creation of the Lesenum.

During the time the Alpha Village would be in existence, members of the Project who may not be able to move to the community would have opportunities to visit. There could be language courses and colloquia about all the various aspects of planning for the Lesenum.

Others interested in the Project and any outside observers could visit the Alpha Village also. The community would be a good way to provide information about the Project and to provide potential members with a positive impression.

The size of the Alpha Village would be small - probably just a few hundred residents. Alphistian townplanning ideas could be put into practice on a small scale, and the amount of land required would be minimal. Even an average-sized farm would likely be large enough.

The Project would have its headquarters in the Alpha Village. Research, planning, and fundraising would take place here, and provide a home for the core staff of the Project.

In time, the buildings and the contents of the Alpha Village would be moved (or reconstructed) as a memorial site in the Lesenum, once it has been established.

The Search for Land

The biggest difficulty for Project Alphistia will be finding land for the Lesenum. New countries have been established in recent history, such as when the USSR fell apart in 1991 or Yugoslavia in the late 1980s. Sometimes this happened relatively peacefully (such as the creation of Slovenia or the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania), but the world is very aware of the wars that occurred in Bosnia and Kosovo, and the continuing conflicts in Chechnya and other parts of the Caucasus.

The most successful example with some historical similarity to Project Alphistia has been the establishment of Israel. This however, has hardly been peaceful. Israel was established on land that had already been lived on for centuries, and conflict was immediate and lasts until this day. While Israel thrives as the homeland for all the world's Jews, and has revived the Hebrew language and developed a wonderful culture, it is dangerously insecure. Its future depends directly on the ability to develop an acceptable negotiated peace with several million dispossessed Palestinians who need a homeland of their own.

Since World War II, many countries were set up around the world in former colonial territories,

often with no regard whatsoever for logic or the sensibilities of the local populations. Countries such as Iraq are a collection of mutually hostile ethnic groups and religious factions and it's difficult to understand why it is worth a war to preserve as it is (other than to exploit its oil resources for insatiable American consumption.) Africa is full of such artificial constructions that have only served to create conflict, prevent development and to keep most of its population in dire poverty.

There are some examples of successful countries like Switzerland, which have distinct cultures living harmoniously (or not quite so like in Canada or Belgium). These countries are among the accidents of history that have succeeded in being viable and admirable.

There is plenty of land left in the world that is uninhabited, but it is common knowledge that every square foot of Planet Earth has already been claimed by one country or another. A percentage of the sea has been as well, and even frozen Antarctica is split up between nations. It will be the Project's biggest challenge to persuade one of the world's nation states to share a small part of its land so that Alphistia can be established.

Alphistia is planned to be very small, partly for that reason. It would be less than 1000 square kilometers. This is an infinitesimal part of the world's territory. A population of less than 500,000 (probably much less) could live comfortably on this land.

Empty land that could support this population will be difficult to find. As explained, it would be far better not to tread upon the rights of people who are already living on a particular territory. It will take time, luck, and patience, but it is important to avoid conflict. It has not been a recent phenomenon, but is hardly unknown historically for one country to sell territories to another, such as the Louisiana Purchase by France and the sale of Alaska by Russia to the Americans.

The Project should also investigate technological solutions that might allow the formation of new land in the sea. This is more unlikely than negotiating for a piece dry land already existing, because there is little shallow water away from shores of countries claiming territorial rights, but should be considered as well.

Building a New Country

When the day comes that Alphistians can start building the Lesenum, they will need to have a plan. Project Alphistia will develop the Action Plan for this, providing the details for building the infrastructure and a timetable for settling Alphistia.

The first settlers - Alphistia's pioneers - will lay the foundations for the new society. They will harness the streams, build the windmills, and install the solar panels to provide the energy Alphistia will need. They will build the electrical power plants and lay the grid for providing electricity to every part of the country.

The pioneers will build the railway and roads, and begin the construction of Alphistia's towns and villages, as well as the factories where the many of the settlers will work.

A phased program of immigration will send the settlers to where they are most needed and where housing is ready for them. It will be essential to co-ordinate these plans with the arrival of Alphistia's citizens.

It will take up to five years to build the infrastructure and another five years for the first wave of immigrants to settle in the new country.

These first ten years will be heady days. Members of Project Alphistia will come from around the world to live together and build the new society. They will be using the Alphistian language on a

daily basis, and creating a new cultural scene. They will be producing electric cars and building towns that are humane and green. They will be working under a political and economic system that reflects their priorities and values. It will be the beginning of the Lesenum.

Wind, Sun, and Water Power

Alphistia would not be dependent on oil to operate its economy, but would make use of the most natural resources we have on this earth - wind, sun, and water.

Enormous amounts of electricity can be generated from windmills, solar panels, and running water. The technology already exists, but in most of the world, the will is not there to convert already existing power generating systems to clean, natural sources.

The US is most dependent on oil to run its economy and to keep its artificially high living standards afloat. The biggest side effect of this dependency is that for most Americans, there is no alternative but to own one or more cars in order to get from their homes to work, to get food, or even to mail a letter. Spatial planning in the US (and many other advanced countries) is focused primarily on moving vehicles from one distant place to another. Bus systems are inadequate in these environments, and only the largest cities have subways. Even if a person wanted to live a greener life, in the US, it would be impossible in many places, and very difficult in most.

Alphistia rejects this approach to modern living. By creating an electric economy from clean energy sources, Alphistians would have choices that most Americans do not have. They could live in pleasant, green environments, with the needs of everyday life very near to them in pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. They could catch an electric bus or tram there that connects to the center of town and all the other neighborhoods. Getting to work would be a short commute,with time to read, listen to music, chat with a friend, or even nap.

The center of town would have all the stores, services and cultural institutions a citizen needs, plus the main railway station connecting to all the other towns and villages in the country. In Alphistia, nowhere would be much more than one hour from anywhere else.

In this kind of environment, a person could easily choose not to own a car. For those who want or need one, they could buy one of three electric-powered models made in Alphistia, or the several makes imported from abroad. All of Alphistia’s motor vehicles would be electric. Because the country would be very small, there would be no need for batteries that run for great lengths of time, and just like cars using gasoline need to stop to fill up the tank, electric cars could make use of the network of electric battery “refueling” stations. It would be just like changing a battery for a flashlight or cassette player - pop out the old battery that can be recharged in the station for other travellers, and pop in the fully charged battery which can run for another 80-100 km.

Industry would also make use of the clean energy provided by wind, sun, and water. Larger factories could have their own generators, just as homes could have their own solar roof panels and windmills. This would make much energy costs very low for enterprises and citizens.

Sun, wind, and water sources are the cleanest ways to generate energy. There would be no car or industrial pollution, no smokestacks, no coal fires and certainly no dangerous nuclear energy. Alphistia would not be breaking new ground by creating and developing a clean, green economy. The methods are already well-known, but most countries are so tied to the oil-based

system, they are unable to make a big change. Alphistia would start from the ground up as a natural energy country, and Alphistians would be willing to make some small sacrifices in order to have a very high quality of life.
Perhaps the biggest “sacrifice”, is that Alphistians would not have the “choice” to buy filthy, dangerous, ugly cars that weigh two or three tons each and eat enormous amounts of gasoline. To live in a country without such horrid things would be worth many real sacrifices. Or so Alphistians would be inclined to think.

A Niche Economy
Alphistia would be part of the world economy, but more on its own terms than countries currently are. Alphistia would choose to have a higher quality of life instead of a flood of cheap goods imported from countries where workers are mercilessly exploited and children are forced to assemble toys. So some items would be a bit more expensive than they could be.
Globalization is good in certain limited respects, but it is more worthwhile to give Alphistians the opportunity to make as many of their own food products and consumer goods as they can, instead of hitching on to a gigantic outside economy based on the lowest common denominator of prices and wages. The dignity of man is lost in that process, (not that it was ever considered to begin with).
The current globalization process is unsustainable in the long run, because too many people lose out along the way. In the US, there are cheap goods available from China sold in stores where wages are so low that employees utterly need such cheap goods to be able to get by. The workers in China cannot even afford many of the goods they produce, and are forced to work the kind of hours Marx and Engels wrote about 150 years ago. (So much for the communist ideology of China). In both the low wage economy of the US, and the even lower wage economy of China and other developing countries, there is little concern of the overall needs of human beings.
Alphistia would reject this approach. While trading with foreign countries ethically, Alphistia would produce what it could, or do without. Every consumer good known to man would not be available to every Alphistian, but a high quality of life and a high living standard would still be created.
Alphistia would seek out niche markets for exports and services. Needless to say, these would be goods produced cleanly and ethically. Since Alphistia would be a trendsetter in electric vehicles, the production and export of “e-cars” and “e-trucks” would be a priority. Alphistia could create a whole branch of the economy based on creating new goods from old recycled products. It could develop a plastics economy using natural sources. Since Alphistia would be a small market domestically, it could produce many handcrafted items, and with an emphasis on quality design and craftmanship, much could be exported.
With the earnings from exports, Alphistia could import products and foods that it couldn’t make itself: pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, tropical fruits and vegetables, etc.
Although a small, locally based market is no longer considered fashionable, it is a proven method of providing employment and a large range of goods. Economics as if people mattered would be the choice made by Alphistia. In some respects, this would result in a different way of living for Alphistians. They would not be locked into a permanent “ratrace” for profits and growth.

Alphistians might not be as up-to-date as far as fashions and trends go, but at least they could conserve their resources for what stands the test of time.
The bottom-line and race-to-the-bottom mentality of late twentieth global capitalism would not be the path taken by Alphistia, but rejected as an outdated and unsustainable system.

Cooperatives and Small Businesses
Alphistia would not be a local branch economy of global multinational corporations. It would develop its own economic enterprises, employing Alphistian workers.
Alphistia's own businesses would be primarily small or medium-sized. In the retail sector, there would be many family businesses, what are familiarly known as mom-and-pop shops. These small-scale companies are proven providers of quality customer service. They are especially good at operating restaurants, neighborhood grocery stores or providing repair services.
Larger enterprises - companies producing goods and services, would be encouraged to form as profit-making cooperatives, although private enterprises could also form. The model would be the extremely successful Mondragon Cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. These are profitable production co-ops which also run their own distribution centers and retail chains. They have also exported many of their products throughout Europe, especially electronics and consumer appliances.
Mondragon Co-ops have their own investment bank, and economic decisions are made by an elected board (elected by the members of the co-op), which appoints managers of the various enterprises. A certain amount of the co-op's profit is invested in new technology or expansion projects, while the rest is given as dividends to the members. These are in addition to the wages they earn working in Mondragon's enterprises.
Alphistia's small economy would be ideal for such a system, with the added advantage being that it would practice economic democracy. Instead of being answerable to shareholders (where the golden rule applies: "he who has the gold rules"), in co-ops, the system is one member-one vote.
Labour unions would of course be legal in Alphistia, to keep all the economic enterprises honest and accountable to workers.
Alphistia would liberate private enterprise from the onerous responsibility of providing for their workers' healthcare or pension benefits. For small businesses in a system like the US, it is simply unprofitable to do so, and millions must work without such benefits, with the state not providing the services either.
In Alphistia, every worker would be protected by the stipulations of the Social Charter articles of the Alphistian Constitution, and further legislation made by the Kilrete - Alphistia's parliament.
All Alphistians would have access to health insurance, not just those employed by companies that could afford to provide it. All Alphistians would have a pension when they retire, or if they become disabled. This pension would cover the basic expenses a person would need to pay for a quality standard of living. For those who want more income, all citizens could pay extra into an annuity system. This would pay out at a guaranteed rate upon retirement or disability, supplements to the basic pensions provided by the state.
If a citizen becomes unemployed, they would not lose their health insurance. They would collect an unemployment benefit equal to the basic pension described above. If a suitable job cannot

be found, retraining programs and paid internships would be available.
These social costs would be equally divided between employers and employees, paid in taxes. For small business people, these taxes would be cheaper than trying to pay the premiums private insurance companies charge in the US for inferior health maintenance organizations, for example.
National health insurance is a proven system throughout the world, which is only rejected in the USA because of ideological prejudices, and the vast powers of the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, who make billions in profits through the misery of others.
Alphistia would reject the American system of providing health insurance and employee benefits.
Alphistia would allow its business owners to concentrate on selling their goods and providing services, instead of bearing the social costs that are the proper responsibility of society at large.
Alphistia would encourage co-ops to provide goods and services at a profit, but structured democratically so that employees are not excluded from management decisions.

The Alphistian State

The most important institution of the Alphistian government would be the national parliament, called the Kilrete. It would be elected democratically by all citizens, using a system of proportional representation. There would be any number of political parties, ranging from left parties such as the Verten (Greens), Pravikense (People's Party) and Praxis (Social Democrats), to the center right - Lesenum (National) and Frante(Freedom). Any party receiving more than 5% of the vote would at receive at least one seat in the 75 member assembly.
Kilrete elections would be held every four years, with the entire country as one constituency. The party with the most votes would be entitled to form a government, as long as it receives 50% of the total. If it does not, it must form a coalition with one or more other parties, with the total number votes of those parties adding up to 50% or more. The leader of the largest party would become the Spor - the premier or prime minister.
The ruling parties would assemble a cabinet called the Stat Rad (State council). Cabinet members must be members of the Kilrete.
At the local level, there would be an assembly elected in each province, known as the Samente. And in towns and villages, there would be a Tanas Rad (Town Council), with a minimum of three members.
Alphistia would have a written constitution outlining all the functions of national and local government, the rights of the citizens, and stipulations for social rights as well.
The judiciary would be independent. The members of the highest court (called the Stat Kort) would be chosen by their peers from the most respected members of the provincial courts, and approved by the Kilrete.
Each province would have its own local court, with one judge hearing simple cases, and a panel of three judges hearing serious cases. Juries would not be used in Alphistia, as they are a feature primarily of the adversarial legal system of Anglo-American influenced countries.
Punishments would be according to the stipulations of the Ritkoda (Law Code), which would not permit the death penalty, and needless to say, torture.
The role of the state in Alphistia would be more important than in some countries with ideologies

promoting a distrust of government. In Alphistia, the government would be considered the legitimate will of the people who elected it, and answerable to them. This is because Alphistia would be a representative democracy with transparent government.
The government would also provide social services to the citizens. In Alphistia, there would be a national health insurance system, a complete program of social security providing pensions for the old, the disabled, the unemployed, and students. These programs would be administered by a professional civil service, and funded by taxes paid by all workers and employers, from enterprise profits, and the national sales tax.
The natural resources of Alphistia would belong to all Alphistians and would be nationally owned. This would include forests, water resources, electric power plants, as well as fixed assets such as the railways, airline, roads, and transit systems. There would be a national bank issuing the perante - Alphistia's currency, The telecommunications system would also be state-owned. The government would own the airwaves, but the Alphistian Radio and Alphistian Television companies would be run by non-profit independent co-operatives, with programming paid for by a license fee and limited advertising.
Alphistia would not have a standing army. There would instead be the Lesenum Garda (National Guard) made up of the police, the border guards, and a small protection force that could be expanded quickly in times of danger.

A Secure Society
Ordinary people want and need a degree of security in their lives, just as much as they want and need autonomy. One without the other is a recipe for personal and social disaster. Modern American life emphasizes autonomy over security, and conventional wisdom pretends that this is normal.
Give American workers the chance to have access to health insurance when they work in low-wage jobs, temporary or part time jobs, or are free lancers. Or provide them with no choice at all as is the case currently, with more than one quarter of American workers having no health insurance. What would American workers do if they could decide for themselves? The choice would be obvious - there would be a balance of security and autonomy, and Americans would have health insurance.
Give an ordinary American the chance to have guaranteed paid vacations that carry from job to job, or no paid time off at all - the choice would be obvious, but for millions there is no choice provided.
Give an average American the opportunity to have enough money to live on after retirement after contributing to social security and private pensions all their working lives, or tell them to gamble all their savings on the stock market. The choice for most would again be obvious, but for far too many, there is no choice at all.
Every other advanced industrialized country except the US provides national health insurance, guaranteed paid vacations, and guaranteed pensions at retirement. The US provides the latter for now, but Social Security is constantly under threat for ideological reasons. There are very few other state-mandated benefits that are universal in the US, because of propaganda that such things are socialistic or somehow hurt job creation.
Obviously Japan, Switzerland, the UK and all the other advanced countries are neither socialist

or have living standards at the level of the Third World. All these countries have made the choice to balance autonomy and security and have very high standards of living.
Alphistia would be like these countries.
The state cannot guarantee that a citizen will never become ill, never need time off, and will never grow old or become disabled. But it is not the individual's responsibility to insure entirely through their own income that they will never cost society a penny.
That's why social security programs were created -in order to spread risks that we all experience throughout society. Insurance companies spread risk for life insurance or against accidents amongst all their policy holders, who pay premiums. At the state level, premiums are replaced by taxes, and unlike private insurance companies, the state does not (or should not) exclude people.
When a society makes these social policies, the payoff is that people feel more secure. They can then concentrate on other aspects of life other than fears that if they become ill they will be bankrupted, that they will be fired if they ever take a day off work, or that they must work until the day they die.
A certain level of personal security is absolutely necessary for a society to function justly and to genuinely prosper.
American crime rates, life expectancy, infant mortality, child vaccination rates, or social stress indicators such as obesity and divorce rates - US statistics are significantly different from most other advanced countries - negatively so.
Alphistia would provide its citizens with guaranteed social rights. The most important would be written into the national constitution, and all apsects of work life would be regulated for the benefit of the employee, without harming the profit potential of employers. Actually, a healthy, secure workfore is a proven way to increase profits.
Entrepreneurs and society's risktakers do not need a laissez-faire social policy to achieve their goals. They can succeed without forcing all of society to live at their levels of risktaking and insecurity. Ordinary people need to be able to be able to enjoy life too, and in a country like Alphistia, the average person would have the opportunities to do so without compromising their security or autonomy.

Culture and Life

The creation of the Lesenum would mean a new culture and way of life. The ideas and ideals of Project Alphistia could be realized for the citizens of the new society.
Alphistia would emphasize the need for learning throughout life, not just for children and young people preparing for careers. Adult education programs would be available at very low cost (or free) through a network of folkschools and cultural centers. These classes would not be just for staying up-to-date with technology or job-related skills, but to enlighten and entertain all those who like to learn new things.
Every town would have its own House of Culture, with a library, classrooms for crafts, the arts, and lectures, and an auditorium for larger gatherings. Enteve would have its own central House of Culture and a network of neighborhood branches.
Connected with these cultural centers would be leisure centers for sports and games in each town. A typical center would have an indoor gymnasium, an indoor/outdoor swimming pool,

playing fields for football and other sports, as well as tennis/volleyball courts etc. These would be available to all in the community, not just those paying for memberships in private associations or clubs.
Folkschools would be residential or commuter learning centers for adults. Some would be located in towns, but others would be situated in scenic spots in the country. Workers would be provided with periodic sabbaticals to take courses at these schools.
A network of spas and resthomes would also be available at reasonable cost, also located in areas outside the towns. Some would focus on rehabilitative cures, and other simply to provide relaxation for their guests.
Private gardens, weekend cottages, and do-it-yourself projects would also be emphasized. These pursuits would provide leisure and productive outlets for many and a direct connection with nature.
Alphistians would live in a society that would balance work, learning, and leisure. Overwork hurts individuals, families and society, and is not as productive as a balanced life. Little is gained from artificial stress, and a great part of the difference between Alphistia and many other societies would be the less stressful aspects of everyday life in the Lesenum. The increase in general healthiness, longevity, and personal satisfaction would be worth a slightly lower gross domestic product.

Another Way is Possible
Alphistia would not be a revolutionary project. It would not propose that the state wither away or that the ultimate society already exists, and needs merely to be copied globally.
To be part of Alphistia would be a choice made by individuals deciding they want to live in the Lesenum. It would be a freely chosen decision, and not for everyone.
But there should be an Alphistia and Alphistians should be able to find one another and work for their goals. A new country is waiting to be made.
Alphistians of the world - unite!

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